The pride of North Carolina's electric cooperatives

Volume 37, No. 7, July 2005

Carolina country

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North Carolina's electric cooperatives provide reliable, safe and affordable electric service to 850,000 homes, farms and businesses in North Carolina. The 27 electric cooperatives are each member-owned, not-for-profit and overseen by a board of directors elected by the membership.

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Carolina Country magazine is available monthly to members of North Carolina's electric cooperatives. If you are a member of one of these cooperatives but do not receive Carolina Country, you may request a subscription by calling Member Services at the office of your cooperative. If your address has changed, please inform your cooperative.

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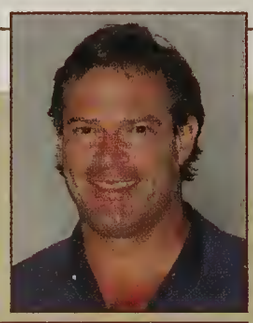

They called it "rural electrification"

Michael E.C. Gery, editor

REA loans helped farmer-owned cooperatives buy the equipment they needed to build their own electric distribution system.

Seventy years ago, in the summer of 1935, virtually no one in the areas that Carolina Country reaches today had electric power. Imagine how hot it was, especially out in the fields during daytime. Those were times when sitting quietly under the shade of a front porch or a tobacco barn roof, sipping a Pepsi or a lemonade, was about as cool as you were going to get, and you appreciated it. Dressed for Sunday church you were just as hot, even if you did have a funeral home fan to wave into your face. To keep your butter cool, you'd place it in a bucket and lower it down the well until just before it touched the water and let it hang there. And you'd haul a lot of water from that well, too.

Relief came that same summer. On May 11, President Franklin D. Roosevelt had signed an executive order establishing the Rural Electrification Administration, an outgrowth of New Deal legislation intended as a Depression-era employment program. The REA led to legislation allowing low-interest federal loans to help build systems that would supply rural America with electricity. Existing utilities at the time were not so eager to use those loans to build systems in sparsely populated areas where a return on investment would be a long time in coming, so farmers and neighbors throughout the nation took matters into their own hands. Accustomed to forming their own cooperatives for buying feed, ginning cotton and marketing tobacco, farmers began forming another cooperative to supply themselves with electricity. In June 1936, neighbors in Edgecombe and Martin counties formed the state's first electric cooperative and later applied for an REA loan.

Needless to say, rural North Carolina was energized. People went door-to-door trying to persuade their neighbors, many of whom had little interest or understanding of electricity, to find or borrow the few dollars required for co-op membership. REA field representatives, local Extension agents and community leaders helped the young cooperatives take their early business steps. And once the poles and lines arrived, nearly everyone wanted a part.

Here is Hubert Prevatte of Robeson County 30 years ago telling historian LuAnn Jones about those early days of electric power:

> Naturally, when we got the lines we were just thrilled to death; we were being rewarded for all our efforts. It created a lot of excitement. Children in the neighborhood came out to watch the construction of the lines. Their dads were glad to help out in any way. In one particular instance I recall I took my own team of horses and pulled line through the Lumbee River swamp because the cooperative did not have equipment at that time to go over these rough places. And when we got to the river with the lines then the neighbors got together with the construction crew and pulled the lines by hand across the river, swam the river and pulled the lines across.

True to their nature, cooperatives continued to focus on the interests of their members. Co-ops helped people acquire and operate electric-powered farm machinery and household appliances that improved their work and everyday lives considerably. Refrigerators, electric fans, and later air conditioners, literally transformed summer life around here.

As they say, a lot has changed in 70 years. The REA, despite political attempts to kill it, expanded into rural telephone, distance learning, telemedicine and community water systems. Its programs now are part of the Rural Development arm of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The cooperatives, now nearly 1,000 nationwide, have grown into sophisticated operations with state-of-the-art construction and maintenance equipment, highly-trained employees and technology that can monitor system faults and even household meters by remote computers.

What hasn't changed, of course, is the cooperative focus on members. Understanding that safe, affordable and reliable electric power is essential these days, cooperatives make delivering that power their highest priority. And then they pay personal attention to people using it. If you consider the major changes taking place in North Carolina farming regions today—for example, the pioneering pursuits in trout farming, vineyards and meat goats reported in this issue of Carolina Country—you can see the evidence of cooperatives caring about progress in their communities.

Straw bales garden

I'm trying out a novel way to grow vegetables and thought I would share it with my fellow co-op members.

I stumbled across the idea of using wheat straw bales to grow vegetables. Presently, I have tomatoes, peppers, squash and cucumbers growing in 20 bales of wheat straw. The plants are looking good, even better than the plants in my traditional garden.

This method is a great way for the elderly, handicapped and apartment/townhouse dwellers to produce their own vegetables. Just think: No soil to till, no weeds to chop, and it's great on your back!

Kent Rogers Kent.rogers@earthlink.net
Wake Forest, Wake EMC

Do you have these photos?

We are trying to find out if the photographs sent to us by Ada Lewis Taylor were returned to someone else by mistake. They are old photos submitted for the soon-to-be-published book of North Carolina rural life called "Carolina Country Reflections." They are numbered on the back.

If someone received these photos by mistake, please contact us at (919) 875-3091.

Here are descriptions of some of the missing pictures:

~ 1959 inside Morehead City Hospital. Sign on wall says "All Out Patient Work $5.00 or less cash."
~ 1955 Latin class holding a Roman banquet.
~ 1956 "capping ceremony" of some of the nursing students who graduated from James Walker Memorial School of Nursing in Wilmington.

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COMING IN OCTOBER

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Reflections

"Carolina Country Reflections," a book of more than 200 of your photographs showing life in rural North Carolina before 1970, will be available in October. The pictures show scenes of families, farms, working, gatherings, fun times and everyday life, along with the stories behind the pictures.

This is a limited edition printing of a high-quality, hardcover "coffee table book." Reserve your copy now. We will ship reserved copies in October.

$46 includes shipping and tax. The price will increase after January 1, 2006.

Note to the Contributors: Contributors whose photographs are published in the book will receive a free copy. You will be notified in August if your photographs will be in the book. If you choose to reserve one before then, we can either refund your full payment or send you two books.

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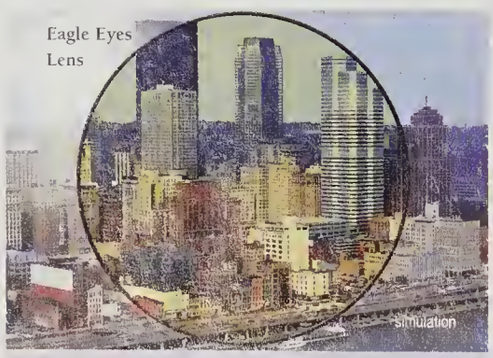
Beware of windshield glare!

This glare-induced "blindness" is especially prevalent in the early morning or late in the afternoon, and due to the extremely reflective qualities of other cars. Even your windshield can make matters worse because of small scratches that can increase reflected glare. This powerful glare of the sun can be damaging to the various layers of the eye. Certain road conditions can raise the amount of UV that you are exposed to by up to 85%.



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Touchstone Energy sponsors Dia de los ninos y libros

North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives brought the wonder of books (libros) and libraries to thousands of Hispanic children (ninos) by hosting Dia de Los Ninos/Dia De Los Libros celebrations this spring.

Children's Day (Dia de Los Ninos)/ Book Day (Dia De Los Libros) is a multicultural celebration of children and books. North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives teamed with El Pueblo Inc., Carolina Wren Press and McDonald's to assist the state's Latino families in discovering libraries and other resources in their communities to bridge the language gap. At each celebration, children received free bilingual books and their parents received electric safety information provided in English and Spanish.

Co-ops that participated included EnergyUnited at Allen Jay Elementary School in High Point and at Glenwood Branch Library in Greensboro, Randolph EMC at Balfour Elementary School in Asheboro, Central EMC at the Family Resource Center in Siler City, Wake EMC at the Wake County East Regional Branch Library in Knightdale, Lumbee River EMC at the Cumberland Headquarters Library in Fayetteville, and Haywood EMC at the Haywood County Public Library in Waynesville.

Matt Vernon

Children crowd around books and art activities at the Dia de los Ninos/Dia de los Libros celebration at Wake County East Regional Branch in Knightdale. Wake EMC hosted the event on behalf on North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives. Matt Vernon and Toni Brown of Wake EMC passed out bilingual electric safety information to attendees.

WHERE IS THIS?

This is a Carolina Country scene in Touchstone Energy territory. If you know where it is, send your answer by July 7 with your name, address, phone number and the name of your electric cooperative.

By e-mail: Carolina.country@ncemcs.com

Or by mail: Where in Carolina Country? P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611.

The winner, chosen at random and announced in our August issue, and will receive $25.

¿En dónde se ubica este lugar?

La fotografía muestra una vista rural del estado de Carolina que se encuentra en el territorio de servicio de la compañía Touchstone Energy. Si usted sabe en dónde se ubica el lugar que aparece en la foto, envíe su respuesta antes del 7°. de julio to anotando su nombre, dirección, número telefónico y el nombre de su cooperativa de electricidad. También la puede enviar por correo electrónico a:

Carolina.country@ncemcs.com; o bien, por correo ordinario a:

Where in Carolina Country? P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611

El ganador, que será seleccionado al azar y anunciado en nuestra publicación de agosto, recibirá $25.

Teachers: apply now for 2005–06 Bright Ideas education grants

North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives have earmarked at least $500,000 for classroom-based projects through its funding of the Bright Ideas Education Grant Program for 2005–2006. Teachers can learn about the program and apply online at www.ncbrightideas.com

Grants up to $2,000 are available. Teachers who submit their application by early August will be entered in a drawing for a digital camera.

All North Carolina certified K-12 teachers are eligible for a Bright Ideas grant, the only program exclusively for the state's classroom educators.

"If history is a guide, we'll probably exceed $500,000," said Suzanne Ward, Bright Ideas coordinator. Last year, the state's 27 electric cooperatives gave out more than $530,000 in Bright Ideas grants, an all-time annual high for the program.

Bright Ideas grants finance innovative and creative classroom projects that would otherwise go unfunded. North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives have financed a variety of hands-on projects, including activities in music, art, history, language, reading, science, career-planning and information technology.

Electricity is a better value

According to the federal Energy Information Administration (EIA), homeowners in the U.S. paid $2 per gallon for heating oil this past winter, up 33 percent over last year. For the average homeowner in the Northeast, this meant that it cost an extra $600 to heat a home this winter compared to the last.

Propane prices have also been rising, up 19 percent in the past year. The average price has risen from $1.43 to $1.70 per gallon, according to the EIA. This meant an extra $190 to a homeowner buying 1,000 gallons a year.

Natural gas has similarly been increasing in price. Its price is up 14 percent in the past year, and has almost doubled in price since 2000. Many homeowners spent more than $200 more to heat their homes with gas this winter compared to the last.

Electricity has the most stable prices of any of the energies. It has increased in price only 3.2 percent. In the past year, the average residential price nationally has increased from 8.23 to 8.49 cents per kilowatt-hour (kwh). Commercial prices for electricity are up by 2.6 percent and industrial prices are up by 4.1 percent. Homeowners using 5,000 kwh to heat their home paid only $13 more this winter than last. Electricity prices have risen approximately the same percentage as the overall rate of inflation.

Electricity price increases have been modest despite having to pay more for the fuels needed to generate electricity. The EIA data indicate that utilities paid 12 percent more for coal and 10 percent more for gas in 2004 than in 2003.

—From the "Solutions" newsletter published by the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corp.

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CAROLINA Wine Country

Vineyards can thrive in North Carolina soil and renew agricultural prosperity

By Ed Williams

Across central North Carolina, particularly in the foothills, a quiet revolution in agriculture hints at what's to come: North Carolina's return to grape-growing and a glorious past that once made it a national leader in winemaking.

Twenty years ago, a sprinkling of vineyards fed four commercial wineries. Tar Heel viticulture—the science of growing wine grapes—poked along for the next decade. Consider what's happened in only the last six years:

- North Carolina wineries increased from 18 to 42 by the end of 2004. Another 10 are expected to open by the end of this year.
- Vineyards doubled, from 175 to 350. More are being planted this year.
- Acreage planted to grapes jumped from 600 to 1,500 from 1999 to 2004.
- The value of wine grapes increased from $2.2 million to $3.3 million annually.
- Two community colleges are now running specialized viticulture programs and a third is poised to do the same.
- N.C. State University is expanding its core of Extension specialists to service grape growers in both the eastern and western parts of the state.
- The state tourism division and the N.C. Arts Council have begun major marketing efforts to promote agri-tourism and pump more money into rural counties that are home to artisans, specialty food producers and vineyards.

Like California, like Carolina

European vinifera—Chardonnay, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon for example—is leading the way and now easily eclipses North Carolina's hybrid varieties such as Seyval Blanc and native grapes such as Scuppernong.

North Carolina—with its beaches, mountains, and Piedmont-Sandhills golfing resorts—has long courted tourist dollars. But a new attraction—agri-tourism—could prove a significant boon, particularly in economically-depressed rural areas.

In the last 15 years, North Carolina grape growers have proven that the soils and micro-climates in certain areas of the state, particularly the Yadkin Valley region, are capable of producing quality wines. That revelation hit sleepy Napa and Sonoma counties in California in the 1950s and it happened again in parts of Virginia in the 1970s. After that, the mystique and romance surrounding the wine world began attracting crowds of tourists, creating an economic ripple effect.

While wine grapes don't bring in the same kind of revenue that tobacco has brought, it comes close. And grapes easily eclipse nearly every other farm crop, fetching $1,200 per ton of grapes in 2004. On average, an acre of vineyard produces three to four tons of grapes a year. Given that financial picture, owners of five or 10 acres of land can turn a tidy profit.

But again, the economic ripple effect of wine is key. Wake Forest University sociologist Ian Taplin recently researched the North Carolina wine industry, concluding that the state's economic gains partially depend on bed and breakfasts, small inns and restaurants springing up around clustered wineries. That spin-off means new jobs in a state that has seen its manufacturing base erode in the last 10 years.

"The more wineries created, the more visibility the industry gets and the more it attracts new people," Taplin said.

That's certainly likely in rural Surry, Yadkin and Wilkes counties, now a hotbed for a dozen wineries. But it may also emerge in places like Alamance County, which saw four wineries open in just the last 12 months. Debbie Stikeleather came from a farming family and watched in alarm as explosive residential growth gobbled the countryside near Mebane. So she and her husband bought an old tobacco farm, planted grapes and built Iron Gate Vineyards, the first winery to open in Alamance County.

"Mebane is growing by leaps and bounds," she said. "It seems like wherever there's a good plot of farm land, there are all these subdivisions going up."

Joe Neely saw the same thing in Davie County, where suburban sprawl from Winston-Salem began chewing into the countryside. So he bought 115 acres on what was once dairy land, planted 38 acres of vineyards and carved out RayLen Vineyards, perhaps one of the state's most visible wineries for travelers along Interstate 40 near Mocksville.

In Boonville, third generation tobacco farmer Frank Hobson could see the golden leaf under fire in the 1990s and decided he needed an alternative crop to see him through retirement. He and his wife Lenna ran the financial figures and now have 30 acres under vine at Ragapple Lassie Vineyards.

"Frank has farmed all his life," said Lenna Hobson. "Being connected to the earth, honoring the earth, has always been important to him. Our agenda for doing this was purely to keep the land agricultural."

Brothers Charlie and Ed Shelton, successful residential and commercial developers in Winston-Salem, saw possibilities on what was once dairy land in Surry County. From it, they carved Shelton Vineyards, one of the largest wineries on the East Coast.

"We envision more hotels, resorts, restaurants, shops, and perhaps a public golf course or two," said Charlie Shelton. "The wine industry, coupled with the area's many natural resources (Mount Airy's "Mayberry" persona and Pilot Mountain's recreational venues) could be a tremendous draw if we had more facilities to accommodate a greater volume of tourists."

It's nothing new

North Carolina's earliest visitors—Giovanni da Verrazano and later crews from Sir Walter Raleigh's explorations—remarked on the profusion of naturally-growing grapes, most likely Muscadine, along the coastline. By 1835, the state's first commercial vineyard, Medoc Vineyards, was founded in Halifax County. By the turn of the century, 25 wineries were operating in North Carolina, making it one of the largest wine-making states in the U.S.

Prohibition brought North Carolina's flourishing wine industry crashing down. It wasn't until the 1970s that Duplin Winery in eastern North Carolina and Biltmore Estate Winery in the mountains again established a Tar Heel presence in the wine world.

Since then, vineyards have been planted as far east as Knotts Island and Ocean Isle and as far west as Asheville and Morganton. The variety of wines made from native grapes, hybrid grapes and vinifera grapes is staggering.

George Denka, who spent much of his career in the wine and spirits distributing ranks, is now president of Shelton Vineyards. He believes that the diversity of grapes produced in North Carolina has created "a real identity crisis" for wines from the region. "I believe we should celebrate the diversity of wines," he said. "But spend some time and money to educate wine consumers about the differences among the various grape and wine types. The only way to overcome the confusion that exists with some consumers and industry professionals is to aggressively educate, taste the wines, compete in national and international wine competitions, and take our story to the marketplace."

Taplin, the Wake Forest University sociological researcher, says North Carolina is not close yet to competing with California's wine industry but "they might be able to establish a niche with newer types of wine made with grapes that grow well here like Viognier and Italian varietals."

Added Denka: "As an industry, we have to be patient and realize it took California well over 50 years to reach the levels of credibility and acceptance that they currently enjoy."

Ed Williams, High Point city editor for the News & Record in Greensboro, has written about the wine industry since 1990. His column "On Wine" appears monthly in the News & Record.

Above left: An early morning fog creeps over Shelton Vineyards near Dobson in the Yadkin Valley region.

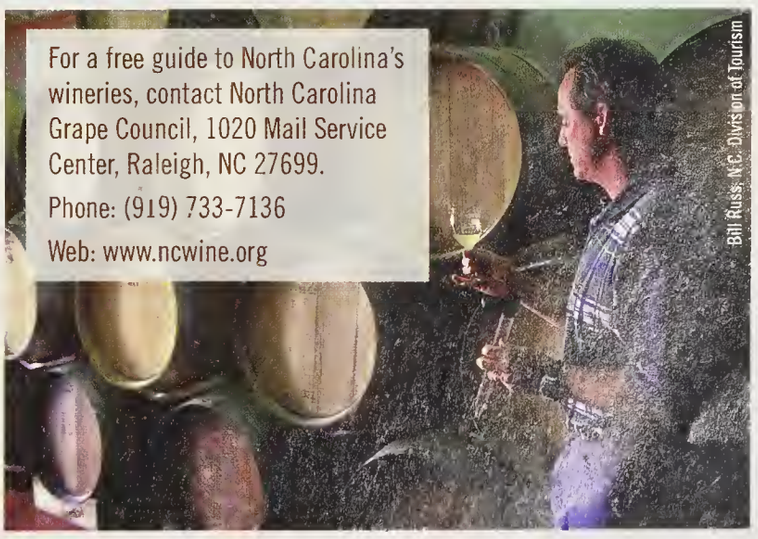
Below left: This block of vines was recently planted at Sanctuary Vineyards along the coast of North Carolina near Jarvisburg.

Below center: The Syrah grape is in its final phase of ripening and awaits harvesting.

Below right: At Westbend Vineyards in Lewisville, the wines are routinely checked as they evolve in the barrel.

John Wright, Sanctuary Vineyards

Childress Vineyards


Bill Russ, N.C. Division of Tourism

For a free guide to North Carolina's wineries, contact North Carolina Grape Council, 1020 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699.

Phone: (919) 733-7136

Web: www.ncwine.org

Chevon & Cabrito

North Carolina goat meat is tender, nutritious and available online

Demand for goat meat has increased steadily across North Carolina in recent years, and it's not only gourmet chefs who are looking for it. The tender, nutritious meat has been available in some IGA, Piggly Wiggly and Whole Foods groceries for some time. Now the North Carolina Meat Goat Producers Cooperative, based in Franklin County, has made goat meat available online.

"Our products can be tracked from the farm all the way to your table for added assurance of quality and satisfaction," the cooperative says. "We ensure our meat is free of antibiotics and medicinal residue."

U.S. Department of Agriculture data reports that while equal in protein, goat meat has fewer calories, less fat and less cholesterol than chicken, pork, beef and lamb.

The meat most favored is chevon (from goats six to nine months, weighing 50 to 60 pounds) and cabrito (from very young, milk-fed goats, four-to eight weeks).

The meat goat producers cooperative actively assists farms that raise meat goats. Many Cooperative Extension agents statewide also are certified in goat production and marketing.

For more information, call the producers co-op at (919) 496-2280. For online information and ordering, go to www.ordergoat.com

Stir-fried Cabrito with Green Onions

⅔ pound goat loin, cut into thin slices (leg can be used if loin is not available)
2 tablespoons sesame or safflower oil
12 green onions, cut into 1-inch lengths

Marinade #1

½ teaspoon garlic powder
2 tablespoons soy sauce
½ tablespoons sugar
2 tablespoons rice wine
2 tablespoons cornstarch

Marinade #2

3 tablespoons soy sauce
½ teaspoon sugar
½ teaspoon black pepper
4 tablespoons water

Cut meat into uniform ⅛-inch slices, 1½ to 2 inches long. Place meat in a sealable bag; add marinade #1 and shake to coat thoroughly. Refrigerate at least 1 hour, shaking at least once. When ready to cook, stir-fry meat in sesame or safflower oil, stirring often. Add marinade #2 and green onions. Continue to stir-fry until thoroughly hot.

Serve the dish with a wild rice/long grain rice mix.

Photo and recipe by Barry J. Barker, food stylist/photographer, on the Web at www.chefb.com and by e-mail: barry@chefb.com.

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Too many bills?

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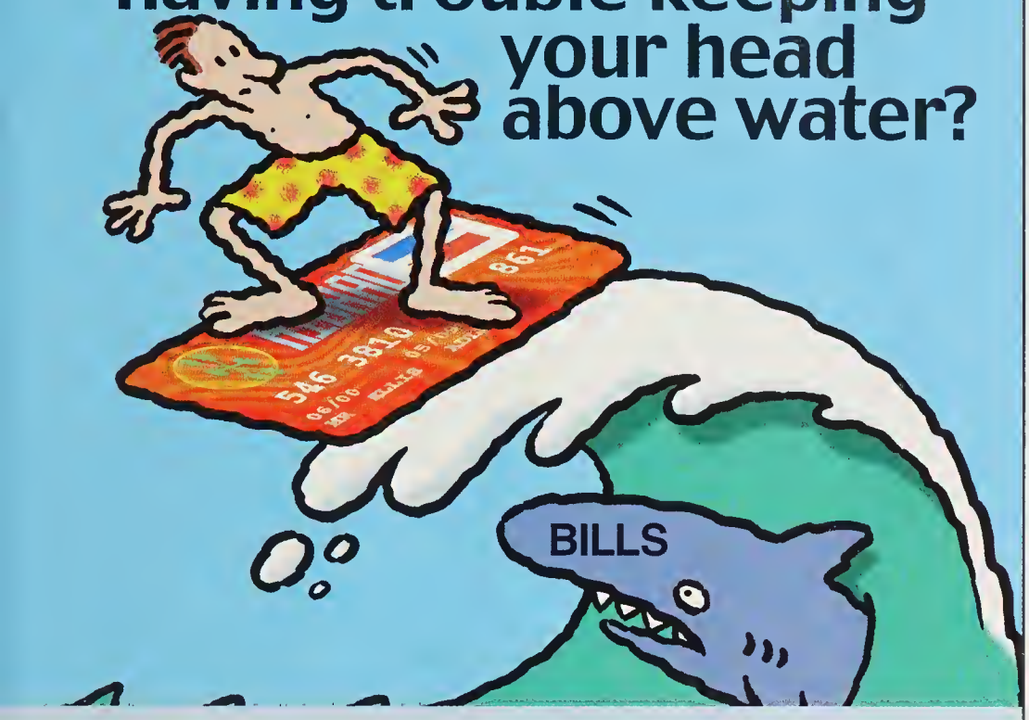

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True stories of the first real meal you tried to make

Fried chicken. There's a good chance that the first meal you ever prepared included your own version of Mama's fried chicken. Your side dishes likely included at least one of the following: cornbread, greens, beans, mashed potatoes or fried fatback. A first meal is no place to count calories.

Those satisfying and simple first meals stand out because you shared them with someone you loved, even if they did go awry. These are the ones that end with the diplomatic friend, fiancé, husband or family member choking down a bad meal, usually without complaint or commentary. Usually.

Your first meal was one to remember—whether it was edible or not.

—Kim Whorton Tripp, contributing editor

GO ONLINE
www.carolinacountry.com

Thanks to everyone who sent in stories. Next month we'll publish your reports on lessons you learned from your children. [Deadline was June 15.] See the remaining themes and rules of our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series on page 15.

A home ec lesson for a football player

Three years of home economics in high school does not prepare everyone for the real world. I am that example.

My husband, who was my boyfriend at the time, was my guinea pig. I prepared a complete meal for him—the one we had previously cooked in the home ec class. It was simple: browned ground beef with onions and green peppers and biscuits. And my first attempt alone. Oh yes, it was full of green peppers (which he does not eat) and biscuits the size of a half-dollar with the consistency of a rubber ball with a hard outside shell. But he ate everything I fixed. He didn't, however, retain any of it. He had a football game that night. But the meal I had prepared came back up to greet him, and he had to be taken out of the game.

My cooking skills did not improve. We have been married over 30 years. We do not have a stove. You cannot imagine the looks I get when I comment on something wonderful that someone has cooked and when they offer the recipe, I reply that I would not be able to recreate their scrumptious delicacy because I am without a stove. My husband and my son do not have a problem with this. As a matter of fact, they are grateful and have let me know this through the years.

Annette Williams Clontz
Morganton, Rutherford EMC

Fried fatback and Pet milk gravy

My husband and I spent our first 15 months of married life with my parents. We eventually bought enough furniture (which we stored in a tobacco pack house) to move into our apartment in Pilot Mountain. Fortunately the refrigerator and stove were furnished with the apartment. The day we moved, we purchased a wringer washer at Boles Hardware in Pinnacle. Along with the washer and our other "treasures" we finally were settled in.

My first meal consisted of fried fatback, gravy, scrambled eggs and toast. It was topped off with a jar of my mom's homemade blackberry jelly. I used canned evaporated Pet milk to make the gravy, which turned out to be tasteful. We continued to use lots of Pet milk, saved the coupons on the can, and redeemed them for dishes.

We put in a day of hard work with getting settled in the apartment and the first meal I prepared we especially enjoyed.

When I think back on it all, we were almost like kids in a playhouse. If things could have remained that simple, what a wonderful life it would have been.

I continue to learn meal preparation and really enjoy cooking. To this day, it is one of my favorite hobbies, but our first meal in our new surroundings was probably our most memorable and enjoyable meal. Until their death, I always looked forward to going back to visit my parents and sharing a meal with them. What a joy it would be if I could do that today.

Ruth Watson
Mt. Airy, Surry-Yadkin EMC

Fresh chicken dinner

In 1932, I was 13 years old. I had never cooked by myself before, so I was all upset one day when Mom said, "You have dinner ready at noon." She instructed me to fix chicken, gravy, potatoes and green beans. She and Dad then went to the field on our Indiana farm to shuck corn. I didn't think that sounded too bad, but I knew the chicken I was to fix was still walking around in the chicken house! I had to catch it, behead it, fix hot water to dip it into to pluck the feathers, scrape the skin clean off all that was left, and then cut it into pieces to fry. The potatoes had to be peeled before they were cooked, but the green beans didn't require much work. They were home-canned and easy to fix. I got everything ready on time, and Mom and Dad really enjoyed it. Mom said, "I knew you could do it."

I have cleaned many chickens since that day, but I'll never forget the one I cleaned the day I fixed my first meal all by myself.

Beulah Montel
Snow Camp, Randolph EMC

Meat and potatoes casserole dish

When I first met my husband 13 year ago, I couldn't cook to save my life. Most of our meals consisted of hamburgers, hot dogs, frozen pizza and fast food. One day I thought I would surprise my hubby with an actual meat and potatoes meal. I bought a canned ham, scalloped potatoes, corn and rolls. After a long-distance phone call to my grandma, I got the ham into the oven with a brown sugar glaze. I followed the recipe on the box of scalloped potatoes. Got everything into the oven—so far so good. Everything smelled great.

When my husband got home, I was so excited when I told him what I was making. Suddenly there was a very loud bang from inside the oven. When I opened the oven door, I found that the casserole dish that had once held my scalloped potatoes had exploded. There was glass and potatoes all over my ham, not to mention my once clean oven.

Dinner that night wound up in the garbage. I was feeling so bad that my wonderful husband took me out for dinner. He even cleaned my oven for me.

Kimberly Banks
Rutherfordton, Rutherford EMC

Cressy greens and fried meat

It was on March 18, 1955. My husband Wiley and I moved into a small house. That day I cut a mess of cressy greens, and on my old wood cook stove I started fixing our supper.

We sat down to a meal of cressy greens, fried streaked meat, cornbread and cold buttermilk. I can see us sitting there at our homemade table with flat rocks under two of the legs because the floor was slanted. We didn't have any chairs, so we turned over bean hampers and sat on them.

I remember warmth from the cook stove and the oil lamp casting soft shadows. I can hear Wiley saying, "This is the best supper I've ever eaten." It was delicious, and nothing could have been finer.

Rosetta E. Brewer
Warrrensville, Blue Ridge Electric

The Star Wars Dinner Party

The first meal I remember cooking was my Star Wars Dinner Party, in honor of the release of "Star Wars Episode 2." I had helped bake cakes and other stuff ever since I could stand on a chair, but I had never made a meal. I thought this was a good chance. I went on the Star Wars Web site and found some recipes.

It all started with the Star Wars Dinner Party. Now Jeremy wants to be a chef.

I made a banner that said, "Welcome to the Star Wars Dinner Party" and hung it on the wall. Then I started the cooking. I made Pit Droid Pizza for a main dish. Pretzels in the shape of Star Wars letters. For dessert I made green Jell-O and put Star Wars action figures in it, and homemade Hoth Ice Cream.

I put the food on the table and decorated with Star Wars-themed cereal boxes, plates, chip bags, and Star Wars Lego's. The family loved it! Now three years later, I want to be a chef.

Jeremy Lucas
Taylorsville, EnergyUnited

continued on p. 16

Send us your best
Earn $50

Here are the themes in our **"Nothing Could Be Finer"** series. Send us your stories and pictures about these themes. If yours is chosen for publication, we'll send you $50. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

September 2005 Celebrity Look-alikes
Photos of people who are dead-ringers for someone famous. Digital ones must be 300 dpi and at least 4 by 6 inches.

Deadline: July 15

October 2005 My Favorite Photo
North Carolina people, places, things. Digital ones must be 300 dpi and at least 4 by 6 inches.

Deadline: August 15

November 2005 It's the Thought That Counts
The dumbest gift you ever received.

Deadline: Sept. 15

December 2005 Holiday Mishaps
Those holiday plans that just didn't work out as you hoped they would.

Deadline: Oct. 15

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. Only one entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos must be 300 dpi and actual size.
4. E-mailed or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
7. We pay $50 for each submission published. We retain reprint rights.
8. We will post on our Web site more entries than we publish, but can't pay for those submissions. (Let us know if you don't agree to this.)
9. Send to: Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616
   Or by e-mail: carolina.country@ncemcs.com.
   Or through the Web: www.carolinacountry.com

Home-grown fried sweet potatoes

When I was a 5-year-old youngster, my mother was working in Highlands. I decided to cook dinner when my mom came home from work. She was so proud and surprised when she entered the kitchen and found me on a stool cooking.

"Oh my gosh, what are you cooking?" she said.

"Cornbread, beans and my favorite fried sweet potatoes," I said.

"We don't have any sweet potatoes," Mom said.

I very proudly replied in a loud voice, "We do so! We have a box full of them!"

"Young lady, you show me those sweet potatoes," she said.

I eagerly took her to the box of sweet potatoes in the cellar. She screamed, "My God! You fried my prize dahlia bulbs!"

Believe me, to this day I do know the difference between dahlias and sweet potatoes. You can imagine how we enjoyed Mom's surprise dinner.

Linda Rogers Williams
Scaley Mountain, Haywood EMC

Just like Elmer's

As a newlywed, I was convinced that I could make my new husband, Jayson, love liver with gravy and fried okra all in one meal. All I had to do was cook it just like my mother always did. That would be easy—or so I thought. Mom just made it look easy.

I was excited as I gathered the ingredients and began "the famous meal." As I progressed, I slowly realized that this meal was not going to look or taste like Mom's. Both the liver and gravy and the fried okra looked like Elmer's Glue. My husband tried to eat it, and I felt like crying. Never fear though, I'd fixed Jell-O for dessert. Who could mess up Jell-O? Only me, the newlywed wanting to make a huge impression on her loving husband, could fix Jell-O that didn't gel and had to be eaten through a straw.

My husband remembered "the meal," because when he saw this theme in Carolina Country he said, "You need to write about our first meal."

Gail Duncan
Pine Hall, EnergyUnited

Mother-in-law's Victory Pie

My mother is a wonderful cook who solely ran her kitchen. Due to this I had little experience cooking until I got married. Wanting to be a good wife, I planned to cook a special meal for my new husband. This was the first meal I ever made using his mother's recipes from her church cookbook. I knew he loved her food so I decided to cook her Victory Pie. It sounded good but I had never seen it so I just followed the directions carefully.

With eager anticipation I awaited my husband's kind remarks on my efforts. Then it happened. When dessert was brought out he asked me what it was. I said, "Your mother's Victory Pie." He shook his head and said, "It looks like a defeat to me."

Twenty-eight years later we are still married, but I learned a good lesson: Never cook your mother-in-law's recipes.

Cathy Crumpler
Mt. Olive, Tri-County EMC

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"Dare's Reef"

becomes the first sea turtle memorial reef in the U.S.

By Amanda Leesburg

A female Kemp's Ridley sea turtle named "Dare" who passed away earlier this year became the first sea turtle in the world this June to be buried at sea in an artificial reef. Eternal Reefs, a company based in Atlanta, will combine Dare's cremated remains with environmentally safe concrete to form a large whiffle ball-like structure called a reef ball for this "green burial" in a permitted location off the North Carolina coast.

On the same day as the at-sea burial, the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue hosted its annual sea turtle release, an event eagerly anticipated by the community of Topsail Beach. The Beasley project puts tracking devices on all of the injured turtles they've nursed back to health. They then put them in vans and have a police escort drive them down to the beach. The turtles start flapping their fins when they hear the ocean waves, according to Beasley staff. At the beach, fans line up on either side to cheer on as each turtle one-by-one returns to its ocean home.

Headquartered in Topsail Beach, the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center is one of the few sea turtle treatment facilities in the U.S. that accommodates injured loggerhead, green, and Kemp's Ridley turtles along the Eastern Seaboard. Injuries can be caused by boat propellers, entanglement in fishing gear or poisoning.

Dare was a female Kemp's Ridley sea turtle, the most endangered of the species. Found in 1999 in Dare County, severely underweight for her young age of 1½ years old, Dare suffered injuries from boat strikes and ulcers. During Hurricane Floyd later that year she spent four days floating in her tank in contaminated flood waters. When rescued, her tank was found 27 feet in the air in a tree. Dare was re-examined by vets and found to have physical and neurological problems, and there was some speculation that she may have suffered a lightning strike during the hurricane. Later, Dare was treated to a "Spa Day" once a week by Beasley Rescue, in addition to continuing treatment of her various medical issues. Following major surgery for a large encapsulated mass, Dare slipped into a coma and died March 10, 2005.

"Our volunteer staff chose to memorialize Dare as a symbol of all the tens of thousands of sea turtles and other marine animals who die each year," said Jean Beasley, executive director of Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue. "We hope that Dare's reef ball, and the reef that will carry her name, will be a reminder of the value and beauty of our fellow species."

Since 2001, Eternal Reefs, based in Atlanta, provides creative environmentally enhancing means to memorialize the cremated remains of a loved one. The company incorporates cremated remains into a concrete mixture used to cast artificial reef formations. The artificial reefs are dedicated as permanent memorials while also bolstering natural coastal reef formations. Expected to last 500 years, over 300 memorial reefs have been placed off the coasts of Florida, South Carolina, Texas, New Jersey, Maryland, North Carolina and Virginia. Contact Eternal Reefs Inc. at www.eternalreefs.com.

The Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center, headquartered in Topsail Beach, is a sea turtle sanctuary committed to the care and release of sick and injured sea turtles. For more information, www.seaturtlehospital.org

Beasley Rescue & Rehabilitation

"Dare," the sea turtle, during her rehabilitation on Topsail Island.

The Dowager

By Lynne Hoffman Foster

JoEllen Willis

Tucked away within the sober village, a brief bicycle ride down the remains of a short lane, is a packed earthen bridge. It crosses a shallow creek onto a hummock. The small hummock is not far from the Pamlico Sound's shoreline as it rises slightly above a marsh. There on the hummock in the marsh is an old house. The house has her back turned toward the Pamlico waters and the prevailing winds. Meandering around three of her sides, barely visible beneath unmown grass grown tall, runs the little creek.

Wild yucca bloom white and high where sour apples once grew. Not even an outline remains of an Irish potato field or a goose pound. The tough old fig tree has retired and in the shallows near shore the clam stakes have rotted and crumbled and the dust has floated away; the pile of shells is turning into coarse sand. Only two broken juniper clothesline posts still stand in what was once the yard—but the old cotton line rotted away long ago. There are no scrubbed shirts or sheets to dry and freshen in the breeze, no nets to reweave. There is no domesticity, no industry in the air.

The once-pretty house is aging without grace, but interestingly, in the manner of an eccentric aging Southern woman. In the light of day she appears merely unkempt and unconcerned with appearances. When sundown gilds the remaining window glass, she

The once-pretty house
is aging without grace,
but interestingly, in the manner of an
eccentric aging Southern woman.

is positively intriguing, flirtatiously beckoning one closer. By last light, when little but her form can be seen, a brooding darkness is revealed, as chilling as a night alone on a moor.

Where once the house hosted laughter and argument, now there is only silence broken by swooshes and screeches and the rattle of loose wooden boards when the wind passes through. A banshee seems to have moved in alongside the resident night owl, and menacing water moccasins prevent the entry of even the bold feral cats prowling the sorry places in the village.

Something strange happens when a house is no longer inhabited. It is as if the house loses its will as it loses its purpose. It ceases to hold itself upright and takes on a hunchbacked persona. Its strength diminishes daily as it sheds its useless elements. The house on the hummock sags and fades to the uneven gray of old age. What is left of rickety shutters barely protect crumbling window frames and broken panes. There no longer is a need to shade slipcovers from the relentless summer sun or to stand guard against terrible Atlantic storms. Front porch posts lean inward, threatening to spill the roof into the front room. Where wind has whipped away cedar shingles, the skeleton of the house has turned to paper. Rotting floor boards give way and finally sink, challenging access to a door locked when the final resident, a lone woman, was carried out by village men to her family cemetery. Now her burial ground too is sliding beneath the weight of time and tide.

Never again will the door open to catch a cooling breeze or admit a caring neighbor. Nor will the aroma of crabs stewing or shad baking settle over the kitchen table precisely at noon. There is no one left to walk to the docks for the daily gift of dinner from the fishermen. Nothing but a rusting old stove is left standing in the back kitchen anyway. The frequent whir of the Singer ceased long ago and the old upright piano will never again accompany a solitary soprano. It is said the old hymns could be heard throughout the village on a still evening when the spirit moved the old woman to melodious prayer.

Flowery curtains that once billowed in the salted breeze have been reduced to rags and the furnishings are now long gone, carted away like salvage from a shipwreck. The red roses that clambered over the roof in spring were lost when Hurricane Emily carried tidewater to places where flood had never been seen before.

The island and the sea are free to reclaim the hummock and the marsh. The spindly blades of grass belong to the redwings that perch precariously atop them, and large, lumbering snapping turtles own the creek and its creatures. A fat raccoon strolls comfortably across the porch, as secure as the red hawk and the otter family who also hunt there. A few oysters are taking hold again in the undisturbed shallows, but they are nearly as rare as scallops now.

Soon there will be no trace of the lane and the creek will be well hidden. One day, inevitably, the wonderful, tough, old house will finally go down with dignity, like the many ships along this beautiful, brutal coast, no longer able to withstand the battering northeast winds and the hurricane tides. Only a few will mourn her, but her essence, like that of a venerable dowager, will forever be a part of the island, even when no vestige of the structure remains.

Shortly after this piece was completed, the house and property were purchased by commercial interests. The Dowager, denied the dignity of a natural transition into obscurity, was razed.

A Hatteras Anthology

"The Dowager" first appeared in "A Hatteras Anthology: The Voices of Hatteras Island Women," published in 2003 by Outer Banks Press, edited by Lynne Hoffman Foster and Linda Elizabeth Nunn. Lynne Hoffman Foster is a member of Cape Hatteras Electric Cooperative and lives on Hatteras Island. She and her husband, Hatteras native Ernie Foster, own and operate the historic Albatross Fleet of charter boats based in Hatteras Village.

"A Hatteras Anthology" is 128 pages in a 7-by-10-inch softcover book and includes writing and art by 29 women. Copies are available at $17 (plus tax and shipping) from

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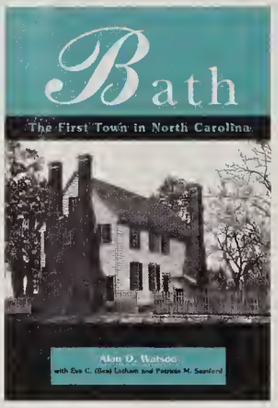
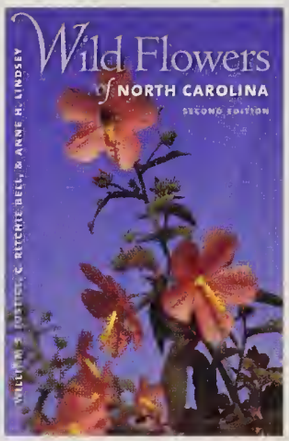
ON THE BOOKSHELF

All about Bath



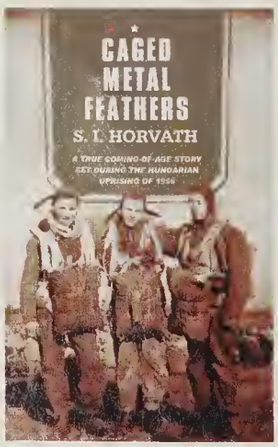
The first town to be incorporated in North Carolina is celebrating its 300th anniversary this year. A new book, "Bath: The First Town in North Carolina," opens an historic window onto both the town and the state's colonial past. From piracy to political friction, Bath was the center of the colony's economic life. Written by Alan D. Watson, the book focuses on ways Bath played a significant role during the state's formative years. Published by North Carolina Division of Archives and History in Raleigh. Softcover, 153 pages, $18. Call (919) 733-7442 or visit http://store.yahoo.com/nc-historical-publications/

N.C. wildflowers



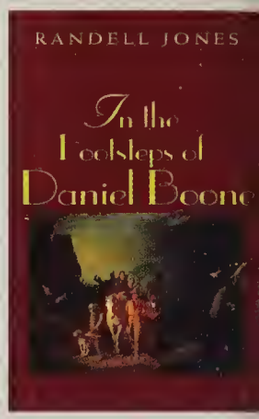
Wildflowers statewide are vanishing under the onslaught of development, and this second edition of "Wildflowers of North Carolina" includes new information about each plant's endangered status and 100 additional species from the common dandelion to the rose-crested orchid. This botanical handbook is a gardener's guide and an amateur botanist's introduction to propagation and cultivation. Each entry includes a color photo, description of key features, habitat, frequency and range. This enlarged edition, compiled by William S. Justice, C. Ritchie Bell and Anne H. Lindsey, includes suggestions on medicinal uses, where to procure plants and possible garden locations to plant them. An appendix chart provides identification by bloom time, location and other features. Published by University of North Carolina Press in Chapel Hill. Softcover, 376 pages, $19.95 Call (800) 848-6224 or visit www.uncpress.unc.edu

"Caged Metal Feathers"



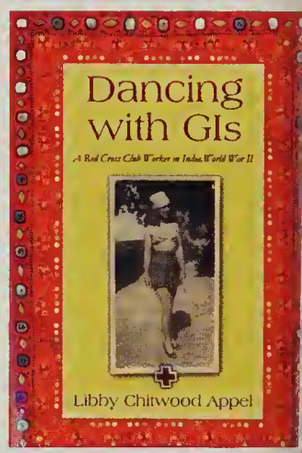
This coming-of-age story is set during the bloody Hungarian Uprising of 1956. Based on the memoirs of Aurora author S.I. Horvath, his adventures include a stay at a holding camp, piloting gliders, escaping Soviet invaders and lobbing bombs at enemy tanks in Budapest, along with a look at the courageous Hungarian heroes who took on the Soviet army. Published by SterlingHouse Publisher in Pittsburgh. Softcover, 192 pages, $17.95. Call (888) 542-2665 or visit www.sterlinghousepublisher.com

Daniel Boone's exploits



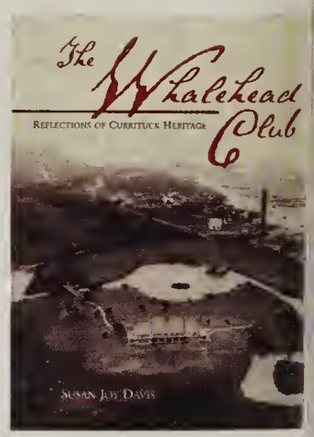
He lived and hunted in North Carolina, marked the Wilderness Trail through the Cumberland Gap, erected a stockade in Kentucky and fought the American Revolution on the western front. Master woodsman, scout, tavern keeper, elected legislator and prisoner of war—Daniel Boone lived a full and eventful life. Author Randell Jones explores the truth behind the legend in "In the Footsteps of Daniel Boone," a combination travel guide and history book that takes the reader on paths that Boone walked and tells stories about the 85 Boone-related sites in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, Missouri, Maryland, West Virginia, Michigan and Florida. Published by John F. Blair Publisher of Winston Salem. Softcover, 186 pages, $14.95. Call (800) 222-9796 or visit www.blairpub.com

"Dancing with GIs"



This memoir of a Red Cross worker during World War II includes visits to war canteens, field stations in India and a city club in Karachi. Author Libby Whitwood Appel, who lives in Davidson, writes about a lighter side of the war. Autobiographical chapters include "Champagne and Cow's Milk," "A Chic Chapeau," "Beeba and the Red Formal," "Not an Ordinary Guy," and "Sacred Crocodiles." Published by Warren Publishing in Cornelius. Softcover, 324 pages, $17.95. Call (704) 992-2829 or visit www.warrenpublishing.net

"The Whalehead Club"



The history of the Whalehead Club, a familiar sight on the Currituck Outer Banks, is explored in depth in this new limited-edition book. From whaling to waterfowling, lifesavers to conservationist sportsmen, "The Whalehead Club: Reflections of Currituck Heritage" represents the first extensive study of the landmark and offers many rare and unique photographs. Published by The Donning Company Publishers in Virginia Beach, Va. Hardcover, $39.95; softcover, $19.95; 160 pages. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of each book will help preserve the historic Whalehead Club. Call (252) 453-9040 or visit www.whaleheadclub.org Or you can purchase the book at Whalehead Club Museum Shop in Corolla.

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**Source: "Lighting the Way to Energy Savings", 1999

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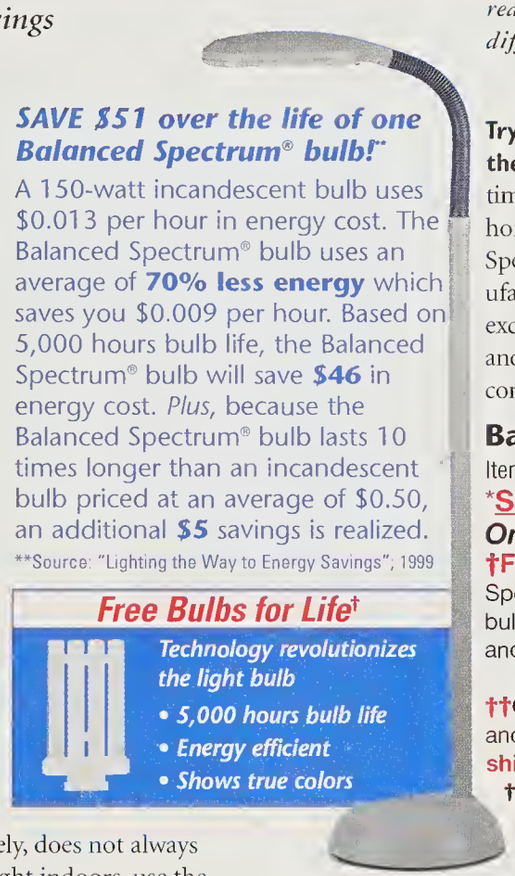

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Rick Queen shows some of Sunburst Trout Company's rainbows.

High-class TROUT

Haywood County waters and weather are just right for these rainbows

Text and photos by Kent Priestley

To get to the source of this remarkable flavor, you'll need to drive up a winding Haywood County cove, along cow-studded pastures, past gravelly river bends, into the mountains where in spring redbud and dogwood blooms hang on steep ridges. When you reach the place where the clear tailwaters of Lake Logan plunge from the Shining Rock Wilderness watershed, you've arrived.

This, you may be forgiven for thinking aloud, is a fine place to raise a fish.

The owners of Sunburst Trout Company have long known that theirs is a charmed location, and the world is waking to the quality and purity of their farm-raised trout. What began as a small pond-stocking farm five decades ago has burgeoned into a far-flung retail and wholesale business serving more than 200 buyers—restaurants, supermarkets and seafood brokers—as well as customers in practically every state via the company's Web site. In fact, one of New York City's premier chefs says this place produces the best trout eggs anywhere.

It was during his boyhood that company founder Dick Jennings succumbed to the 'call of the trout.' The Pennsylvania native had grown up visiting his grandparents' land near Cashiers in Jackson County, walking the woods and fishing the swift waters that ran through their property. The experience led Jennings in 1948 to establish a commercial trout farm there, and to set about learning how to raise the fish better and more efficiently. In 1965, he moved the business from Cashiers to its present Haywood County location near Canton, where its electric service is provided by Haywood EMC. Jennings' daughter, Sally Eason, and her husband, Steve, joined the operation in 1980.

"Dad had no idea how it would turn out," says Sally Eason during a tour of the company's grounds. "It was a work in process, you might say."

Cool, pure water is the most critical element in raising healthy trout, and Sunburst has it in abundance. Each minute, 12,000 gallons of fresh water gush into the concrete raceways where the trout are raised, flushing wastes to a settling pond for eventual composting, and recharging the water with oxygen. The water brings with it an acid tang, courtesy of the leaves shed each fall by the hardwood trees that cloak the watershed. The same quality is passed along to the trout, giving Sunburst's product a longer shelf life.

Sally Eason strides expertly down the narrow catwalk that stretches across the farm's largest set of raceways. Below, in the clear water, hundreds of trout form a speckled, living mosaic then startle and skitter away, breaking the water's surface with their movement.

10,000 pounds of rainbows per week

The company raises exclusively rainbow trout, and processes nearly 10,000 pounds of fish each week through every season. Treated to a high-protein, high

fat diet, the fish take about four years to reach their average harvest weight of three pounds. The feed includes a natural carotene that imparts a pink tinge to their flesh, a selling point for customers more familiar with store-bought salmon.

Once netted, the trout—never more than 600 at a time—rest in an ice slurry that quick-chills them and reduces trauma during the dressing process. "They basically go to sleep," says Eason. "We've found over the years that it's a much more humane and organically acceptable way to handle the fish." The fish are cleaned and then passed through a motorized, Swiss-built filleting machine. Fillets are then hand-trimmed, and, according to customer wishes, the tiny pin bones may be removed using a specially designed tool. It is delicate, painstaking work.

"We have some five-star chefs as customers who want a fillet that's trimmed perfectly, every fin cut off, the pin bones removed, and they don't care what they're going to pay for it," explains Eason. The process, from harvest to cooler, clocks in at less than one hour.

Smoked trout is one of the company's most in-demand products. In one corner of the processing room, Wes, one of Eason's two sons, tends the hot smoker. The firebox burns a blend of hickory wood and grapevines, and the fillets are slow-smoked at 145 degrees. They emerge the color of mahogany and laced with a complex, delicate flavor, courtesy of the wood smoke and a blend of spices.

Sunburst also "cold smokes" trout. Select cuts of trout are coated with Kosher salt and dill and bathed for hours in red oak and charcoal smoke, chilled to 56 degrees by being passed through an ice chamber. The resulting product, finely shaved, is akin to lox.

Sally Eason, daughter of Sunburst Trout founder Dick Jennings, with employee Kyle Vaughn. "We're a family," Sally says of the Haywood County operation. "It's about more than the fish."

The caviar

About 16 years ago, Eason's father finally grew tired of seeing his trout's golden eggs go to waste. Then as now, demand was increasing in the U.S. for alternative sources of caviar, as stocks of European sturgeon dwindled. Sunburst, it turns out, had long been discarding its most valuable product.

"We began to experiment with, gosh, I can't even tell you how many recipes for caviar. So much trial and error," says Eason. "Today, caviar is probably our flagship product."

Caviarteria, a major wholesaler in New York, offered to buy whatever Sunburst produced. Then four years ago, an out-of-the-blue phone call from New York chef Rick Moonen, a standard-bearer for ecologically sustainable caviar, brought the company a torrent of new business.

"Rick said he'd been getting our product from Caviarteria, and wondered if he could buy it from us direct," Eason says. "I said 'sure.' It turns out that he actually had lots of clout in New York. He did interviews and TV shows and articles about our product. He's got a lot of friends, and soon his friends are calling, and the Culinary Institute of New York is calling. That was a very serendipitous phone call."

Accolades followed Moonen's attentions. A glowing write-up of Sunburst's trout caviar found its way to the pages of Gourmet magazine in December 2001, just weeks after the company brought its new Web site online.

"It was just insane, what that article did for our Web sales," Eason says.

On a fin and a prayer

It hasn't been all success and champagne toasts at Sunburst, however. In 1986, a prolonged drought almost forced the company to close its doors forever.

"We lost all of our fish, and thought were going to shut down for good," Eason says. "It just seemed like too much of a loss to suffer. But after a few months of being closed, my dad and my husband thought, 'you know, we could maybe do something with this. We should rebuild.' "

Rebuilding meant replacing several outmoded trout ponds with a new set of concrete raceways, and adding a liquid oxygen tank to the company's standard equipment, which cools the water supply during summer's hottest, driest spells.

"Rain is a huge factor, maybe the biggest factor in trout farming," says Eason. "For us, a shower every day would be ideal. It used to do that, maybe 50 years ago, but in the cycle we're in now, we don't see it." She smiles. "We're probably the only people in western North Carolina who would be thrilled to see it rain every day."

Last summer, there was far too much of a good thing. The farm, like so much of western North Carolina, was buffeted by back-to-back hurricanes. The flooding that ensued destroyed the pipe that brings water from Lake Logan and scattered their precious trout to the winds. Miraculously, says Eason, "we only missed one day of processing, which is pretty amazing."

Sunburst employs a tight knit crew of between 12 and 18, depending on the season. Turnover is low.

"Above all, our philosophy is that we're a family," says Eason. "Families tend to pull together and work better than strangers. That, really, is the key to our success. It's about more than the fish."

Kent Priestley of Asheville is a regular contributor to Carolina Country.

How to get Sunburst trout

Fresh trout from Sunburst is served at Asheville's landmark Grove Park Inn and at the Inn at Biltmore Estate. Selected products are available regionally at the following stores: Ingles, Harris Teeter, the Fresh Market, Earthfare, the French Broad Co-op, Bi-Lo, Wellspring Grocery, and Whole Foods.

Products may also be ordered direct for home delivery at the company's website, www.sunbursttrout.com. Sunburst Trout Company may be reached toll-free by calling (800) 673-3051.

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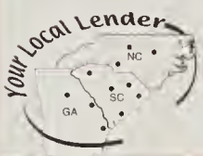

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				X	P 3
P 3	U	R 2	P 3	L	E

Letters have been substituted for digits in this multiplication puzzle. Given P=3 and R=2, can you replace the missing digits to change ORANGE to PURPLE? Repeated letters stand for repeated digits.

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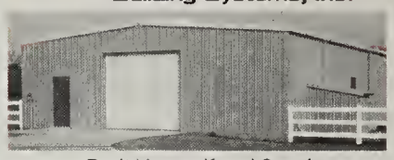

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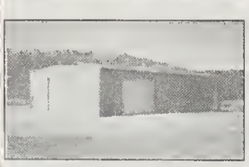

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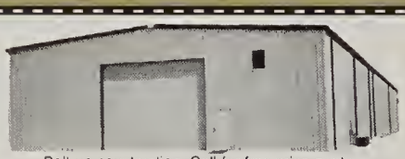

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Finally a Shine That Lasts

Miracle Polish Ends Struggle With Tarnishing Metals. By D.H. Wagner

Lately, I have noticed quite a few newspapers and magazines praising a polish formulated by a homemaker. The articles report that Donna Maas grew frustrated with rubbing and scrubbing her silver, brass and other metals only to see them quickly become dull and tarnished again. Determined to put an end to her constant battle with tarnish, Donna formulated a metal cleaner and it's transforming the industry.

Anita Gold, nationally syndicated columnist and expert on the restoration of antiques calls MAAS (named after its inventor) "The best and most amazing polish in the world." Ms. Gold wrote in her column, "A truly miraculous polish referred to as "miracle polish" that'll turn the most disastrous pieces into the most de-bright-ful is MAAS Fine Polishing Creme For All Metals, which cleans, restores, preserves and polishes to perfection any brass, copper, chrome, silver, stainless steel, aluminum, gold or any other metal with amazing results - no matter how badly stained, spotted, discolored, flood-damaged, weathered, dirty, dingy, drab, or dull they may be."

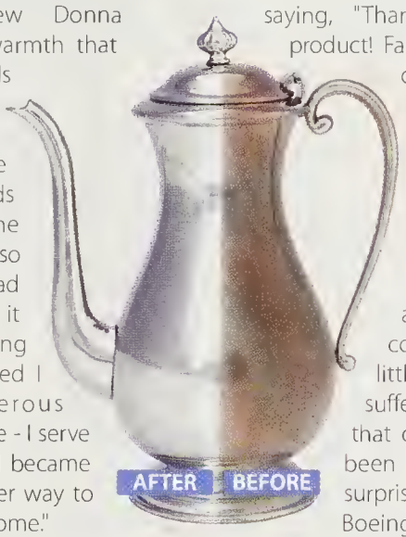
Since I had an old brass lamp in desperate need of restoration, this journalist decided to put MAAS to the test. The lamp had been stored in the garage and was in far worse condition than I remembered. I was flabbergasted as I watched the polish wipe away layers and years of tarnish. Never have I used anything so easy. The lamp actually looks better than when I purchased it. Better yet, months later it's still glowing!

The polish worked so effortlessly, I decided to refurbish my mother's antique brass and copper cookware. The badly stained pots and pans developed black spots that had been impossible to remove. MAAS wiped away years of built-up residue even from the most discolored pieces. While polishing, I noticed MAAS applying a shine on the stainless steel sink. WOW! The shine is unbelievable and although I wash dishes every day, the shine keeps-on-shining. And it's no longer covered with ugly waterspots - water just rolls off the protective finish and down the drain.

The **Good Housekeeping Institute** recommends MAAS for restoring heavily tarnished heirlooms stating, "MAAS cleans best and gives lasting results." The Miami Herald says, "Polishing product can renew old silver." And The Chicago Tribune headline sums it all up by proclaiming "One Amazing Polish Is The Best At Everything."

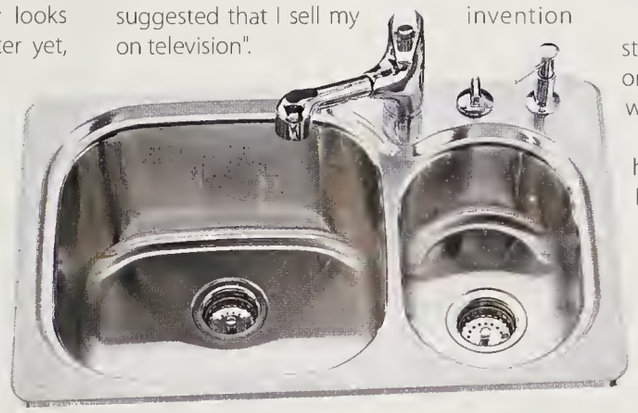
How did a homemaker come up with something the industry's experts couldn't? The reporter in me had to find out.

During our interview Donna explained, "I enjoy the warmth that beautifully polished metals add to a home. However, not the hours it took to keep them tarnish free. The harsh cleaners left my hands dry and burning - one instant silver dip smelled so bad I felt sick. When I read the label, I discovered it contained cancer-causing ingredients. I never realized I was using a dangerous substance on my silverware - I serve food with it! That's when I became determined to find a better way to care for the metals in my home."



And that she did. Her formula developed with a chemist friend, has a mild scent and feels like a hand cream. It's non-flamable, highly concentrated and leaves a deep, rich one-of-a-kind luster beyond anything I've ever seen.

"To my surprise," Donna reveals, "the formula far exceeded my original goal. MAAS completely renovated a sun-damaged fiberglass boat, removed residue from glass fireplace doors, polished up clouded crystal and glass vases, wiped scuffs and stains from linoleum, plastic lawn furniture - it even reconditioned a Plexiglas windshield. The restorations were so remarkable everyone suggested that I sell my invention on television".



Donna sent samples of her polish to televised shopping channels and both QVC and Home Shopping Network asked Donna to personally appear on TV to demonstrate her product. Within minutes of Donna's first appearance the phones lit up with hundreds waiting on line to place their orders. As soon as viewers saw how effortlessly MAAS removed tarnish, stubborn spots, and stains from the piles of badly oxidized metals on stage - MAAS hit big time. 17,000 viewers called during MAAS' debut and encore performances quickly brought a million dollars in record-breaking sales.

Sheila Oetting in Florida wrote Donna saying, "Thank you, for a wonderful product! Family treasures with 30 years of tarnish, grime and corrosion are gleaming. I'm so thrilled to see the beauty that had been hidden all those years."

Leona Toppel, was about to throw away a brass chandelier. "No amount of elbow grease could shine it up. With very little effort (a big plus since I suffer from arthritis) MAAS made that chandelier look like new. It's been years and to everyone's surprise it's still glowing."

Boeing and McDonnell Douglas tested and approved the polish for use on jet aircraft. The U.S. Air Force, Army, Navy, Coast Guard and Department of Defense worldwide have ordered MAAS. If every branch of our military is using this polish to pass inspection, imagine what it will do for your home.

"MAAS outperforms every cleaning product I've tried," Donna beams with satisfaction. "So if you're as tired as I was of cleaning metals just to see tarnish reappear a few weeks later, MAAS it!"

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By Carla Burgess

Make your watering count

July in the garden can be trying—trying to stay cool, trying to fend off mosquitoes, trying to keep the plants from scorching. No matter how you hydrate your lawn or garden—sprinklers, soakers, drip irrigation or hand-watering—the same basic advice applies. Water in early morning or late afternoon, to avoid losing moisture to evaporation. When you water, make it count—a good, long soaking (4–6 inches deep) every few days or weekly is much better than a daily spritz. Lawns and gardens need about 1–2 inches of water per week (from rain or irrigation), and every two to three days in hot weather. If you're watering with sprinklers or nozzles, you can gauge the amount applied by placing several empty tuna or cat food cans within the spraying area. Water at a rate of about ½ inch per hour to allow infiltration and prevent runoff. Keep in mind that young plants, shrubs and trees may need larger amounts of water until they are established. When watering with a handheld hose, soak the bases of plants if practical. If water runs off too quickly, move to another spot and come back after the water has been absorbed. Be judicious when watering. If you see one or two stressed plants, water them with a jug or spray of a hose, rather than soaking the whole garden.

For hand-watering, apply about 5 gallons of water per 10 square feet—the amount delivered by a ⅝-inch garden hose operated for 1 minute at medium pressure. Water shrubs less than 4 feet in height for about 1 minute; water another 15 seconds for each additional foot of height. Large trees need about 6 or 7 gallons for each 10 square feet of canopy.

Soaker hoses are an inexpensive way to get water right where it needs to be, at the roots. But it can be a frustrating dance to get the hoses uncoiled and in position. To work out the kinks, lay them in the sun for a while before placing them. Cheap drip-irrigation systems for small gardens are also available.

Mulch is an excellent way to retain soil moisture. In beds, 2–4 inches is about right (for shredded bark). Too thick a layer can create a mat or barrier that keeps water from entering. Don't let mulch touch plant stems. When mulching trees, think doughnut, not volcano. Leave a depression in the center, and keep the inside rim at least 12 inches from the trunk of the tree. Do not apply more than 4 inches of mulch. How much mulch should you buy? A 3-inch layer spread over 10 square feet requires about 25 cubic feet of mulch. For a handy, interactive mulch calculator for your specific needs, visit this Cornell Cooperative Extension link—www.ccenassau.org/hort/html/calculator_soil_amend.html

Exploring the cosmos

In the universe of flowering annuals, cosmos are among the most radiant. The flowers are held atop tall stems (1–6 feet, depending on the variety) with lacy or ferny leaves. These

The annual cosmos blooms from summer to frost in hues of yellow, orange, pink, red and white.

charmers work hard for little compensation (other than full sun). In fact, if the soil is too rich and fertile, they become lanky and produce more foliage than flowers. Once they emerge, the plants are very drought-tolerant. Cosmos is sometimes called "Mexican aster," owing to its origin in the American tropics. There are more than a dozen varieties and mixes of solid colors to choose from, plus 'Candy Stripe,' with its white petals and red margins, and 'Seashell,' with its unique curled petals that appear tubular. Cosmos make beautiful, long-lasting floral arrangements.

What did I plant there?

I've seen gardeners devise some pretty creative plant markers. Here are some:

- Strips cut from used bleach or milk jugs, cat-litter containers, and disposable plastic food tubs.
- Wooden craft sticks.
- Handles of plastic knives.
- Rocks placed in the garden.
- Slats of mini-blinds. (Use aluminum ones, because the Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that lead may be present in imported vinyl blinds.)

To mimic the look of expensive store-bought tags, I've fashioned permanent plant stakes from pieces of copper flashing and metal clothes hangers. The surface of copper flashing is malleable; a pen or pencil will make an indelible impression. Wrap copper flashing around wooden craft sticks to create in-ground markers.

Carla Burgess' roots as a gardener are in Sampson County. She can be reached at ncgardenshare@mindspring.com

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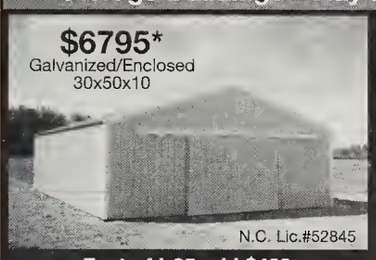

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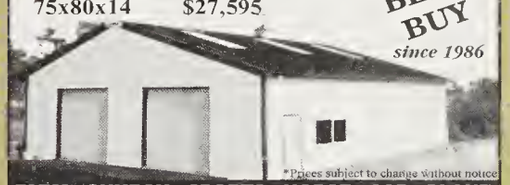

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By James Dulley

Geothermal heat pumps' payback is long-term

Geothermal heat pumps are a very efficient, comfortable way to air condition and heat homes, but you cannot be sure if installing this system will provide the best payback without having a detailed heat loss/gain analysis done for your home.

For example, if your house is very energy-efficient and already has low year-round utility bills, then installing a new system that cuts those small bills in half will not result in a huge savings.

However, even if an analysis of your home shows the economic payback from installing a geothermal heat pump is about the same as a less expensive standard heat pump, consider other factors. By using less electricity with a geothermal system, there are fewer emissions from generating plants and our resources will last longer. It also reduces the peak summertime electric load for the utility companies, and this reduces the need for long-term electric rate increases.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has analyzed six major cities of very different climates, from Burlington, Vt., to Phoenix and found geothermal heat pumps in homes produce the lowest year-round utility bills of any central heating/cooling system. Other advantages are high durability and low-maintenance. Since outdoor air is not needed with a geothermal heat pump, the noisy outdoor condenser unit is unnecessary. The entire unit can be indoors and the only sound is a very quiet compressor.

Write for (instantly download —www.dulley.com) Utility Bills Update No. 924—buyer's guide of 14 geothermal heat pump manufacturers (26 models) listing stages, efficiencies, outputs, features, freon/R410A, cost comparison chart, and ground loop details. Please include $3.00 and a business-size SASE.

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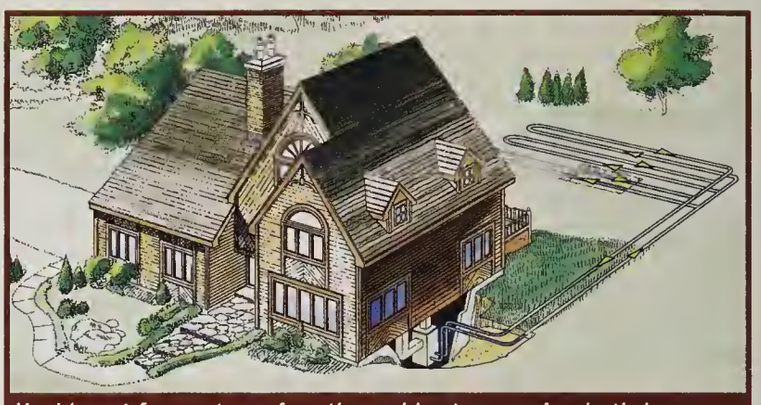
To give you an idea of how efficient geothermal heat pumps are, an older but still working central air conditioner may have an efficiency rating of 8. The most efficient geothermal heat pumps have efficiencies as high as 27. If it now costs you $300 per month to cool your house, your monthly cooling electric bills would be cut to less than $100. If you now use an electric resistance furnace during winter, the heating savings may be even greater.

Almost every geothermal heat pump offers an optional built-in desuperheater. During summer, any heat pump or central air conditioner draws heat from the air inside your house and transfers it outdoors. Instead, a desuperheater diverts this heat drawn from inside your house to your water heater for basically free hot water. With a large family, this can save another $100 per month for water heating. During winter, some geothermal models are also designed to heat water efficiently when your house thermostat is not calling for heat.



Yard layout for one type of geothermal heat pump. A polyethylene pipe is arranged in a ground loop either in a horizontal trench or vertical holes (these require less space). A water/antifreeze solution runs through the pipes, which are connected to the unit inside your home. Your contractor can determine the length of pipe required and whether horizontal or vertical is best.

Geothermal heat pumps produce their super-high efficiency because they use the huge thermal mass of the earth instead of the outdoor air. During winter, the ground temperature stays warmer than the outdoor air, so it is easier for the geothermal heat pump to draw heat into your home. During summer, the ground stays cooler than the outdoor air, so the geothermal heat pump can dump the heat more efficiently.

Installing a typical three-ton (36,000 Btu) geothermal heat pump will cost several thousand dollars more than installing a gas furnace and a central air conditioner. The geothermal heat pump often will pay back the higher initial cost in about eight years or less depending on local utility rates. Geothermal heat pumps typically have a life of 20 years or more.

Many geothermal heat pumps offer all the comfort options of standard air conditioners or heat pumps. They may also produce warmer air than a standard heat pump during the winter. Models are available with two-stage compressors and efficient variable-speed blowers to closely control temperature and humidity. Some models use new ozone-friendly R410A instead of freon.

You don't need a large yard for a geothermal heat pump. There are two designs. One type uses a polyethylene pipe ground loop either in a horizontal trench or vertical holes (these require less space) in your yard. A water/antifreeze solution runs through the pipes, which are connected to the unit inside your home. Your contractor can determine the length of pipe required and whether horizontal or vertical is best.

The other design (called DX) uses small copper tubes buried in the ground and the refrigerant flows directly through them. The heat exchanger is not needed, and less tubing is needed because of the direct heat exchange with the ground. This is often ideal for smaller yards.

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Say What?
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Butter Pecan Ice Cream

½ cup chopped pecans
1 tablespoon butter
1½ cups half-and-half cream
1 cup packed brown sugar
2 eggs, lightly beaten
½ cup heavy whipping cream
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

In a small skillet, toast pecans in butter for 5–6 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool.

In a heavy saucepan, heat half-and-half to 175 degrees; stir in the brown sugar until dissolved. Whisk a small amount of hot cream mixture into the eggs; return all to the pan, whisking constantly. Cook and stir over low heat until mixture reaches at least 160 degrees and coats the back of a metal spoon.

Remove from the heat. Cool quickly by placing pan in a bowl of ice water; stir for 2 minutes. Stir in whipping cream and vanilla. Press plastic wrap onto surface of custard. Refrigerate for several hours or overnight. Stir in toasted pecans.

Fill cylinder of ice cream freezer two-thirds full; freeze according to the manufacturer's directions. Refrigerate remaining mixture until ready to freeze. Allow to ripen in ice cream freezer or firm up in the refrigerator freezer 2–4 hours before serving.

Yield: 1 quart.

Rocky Road Ice Cream

3 cups milk
3 cups half-and-half cream
9 squares (1 ounce each) semisweet chocolate
2¾ cups sugar
¾ teaspoons salt
6 cups heavy whipping cream
3 cups miniature marshmallows
2¼ cups miniature semisweet chocolate chips
1½ cups chopped pecans
6 teaspoons vanilla extract

In a large saucepan, combine milk and half-and-half; heat to 175 degrees. Add chocolate, sugar and salt; stir until chocolate is melted and sugar is dissolved.

Remove from heat. Cool quickly by placing pan in a bowl of ice water; stir for 2 minutes. Cool completely. Transfer to a large bowl; stir in the remaining ingredients. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Fill cylinder of ice cream freezer two-thirds full; freeze according to the manufacturer's directions. Refrigerate remaining mixture until ready to freeze, stirring before freezing each batch.

Allow to ripen in ice cream freezer or firm up in the refrigerator freezer for 2–4 hours before serving.

Yield: about 4½ quarts.

Banana Split Supreme

¾ cup butter or margarine, divided
2 cups confectioners' sugar
1 cup evaporated milk
¾ cup semisweet chocolate chips
24 cream-filled chocolate sandwich cookies, crushed.
3–4 medium firm bananas, cut into ½-inch slices
2 quarts vanilla ice cream, softened, divided
1 can (20 ounces) crushed pineapple, drained
1 jar (10 ounces) maraschino cherries, drained and halved
¾ cup chopped pecans
Whipped topping, optional

In a saucepan, combine ½ cup of butter, sugar, milk and chocolate chips. Bring to boil over medium heat; boil and stir for 8 minutes. Remove from the heat and cool completely. Meanwhile, melt the remaining butter; toss with cookie crumbs. Press into a greased 13-by-9-by-2 inch pan. Freeze for 15 minutes.

Arrange banana slices over crust; spread with 1 quart of ice cream. Top with 1 cup of chocolate sauce. Freeze for 1 hour. Refrigerate remaining chocolate sauce. Spread the remaining ice cream over dessert; top with pineapple, cherries and pecans. Cover and freeze for several hours or overnight. Remove from freezer 10 minutes before serving. Reheat the chocolate sauce. Cut dessert into squares; serve with chocolate sauce and whipped topping if desired.

Yield: 12–15 servings.

Recipes are by Taste of Home magazine. For a sample copy, send $2 to Taste of Home, Suite 4321, PO Box 990, Greendale WI 53129-0990. Visit the Web page at www.tasteofhome.com.

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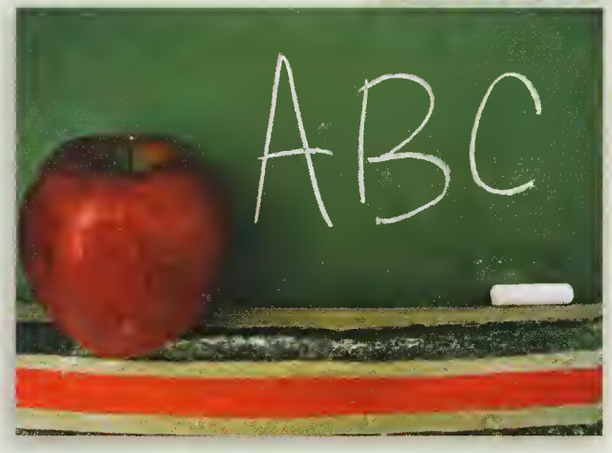

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